

HONORING THE LIFE OF LEONARD  
EARL ROBERTS, SR.

### HON. LAURA RICHARDSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 12, 2011*

Ms. RICHARDSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Leonard Earl Roberts, Sr., a public servant and community leader, whose impact has been felt not only in Southern California but throughout the country. On July 5, 2011, Mr. Roberts passed away, leaving a legacy of service and patriotism. He will be dearly missed by all who knew him, but his example lives on in all of the lives that he touched.

Leonard Earl Roberts, Sr. was born in 1925—at the height of the Harlem Renaissance—to Mary Queen Dorsey in Vidalia, Louisiana.

Leonard, Sr. was no stranger to meeting and overcoming adversity. In his desire to serve his country, he joined the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) at the young age of sixteen, where he participated in the efforts to rebuild our Nation's infrastructure during the economic recovery efforts from the Great Depression. Later that year, Leonard, Sr. stepped forward to defend our country following the events of Pearl Harbor, despite being under age, and quickly advanced to the rank of staff sergeant. Leonard, Sr. was in the first wave to land on Omaha Beach during the Normandy invasion on June 6, 1944, as part of Operation Overlord, now known to most of the world as D-Day. He successfully led his platoon in many battles until his honorable discharge on December 7, 1945 at the close of the war. His entire outfit received the Bronze Indian Arrowhead for Assault Trooper, the Cor-De-Guerre—France's highest military honor—and several other medals and honors.

Upon his return home after military service, he sought out and married his childhood sweetheart, Dessie. Leonard, Sr. and Dessie moved to Boston, Massachusetts, taking advantage of the GI Bill and attending the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), where he received an Engineering degree. In the following years, Leonard and Dessie welcomed three children to the family—Donna, Janet, and Leonard, Jr.

Leonard, Sr. soon moved his family to Los Angeles, California—where children Jacqueline and Keith were born—to begin his lifelong career in the Aerospace industry which was his civilian way of continuing his service to our country. He designed a four axis machine for specialized production of precision oversized aircraft parts which revolutionized the industry. In 1972, Leonard, Sr. established Roberts Aerospace Manufacturing Engineering Corporation (RAMEC), and continued to receive coveted government contracts, as a result of his expertise in precision manufacturing for nearly four decades until the time of his passing. Equally of note, Mr. Roberts was well known in the industry as a man of integrity.

Leonard, Sr. valued God, Country and, above all else, family, which is demonstrated by his marriage to Dessie for sixty-five years and his commitment to his children. His love will live forever in the hearts of his grandchildren Allen Talbert, Kellie Clay (deceased), Chanel Troy-Thompson, Danielle Benoit-Williams, Natalie Roberts, Raquel Roberts-Rich-

ards and Bridgette Craddock and Grandchildren Tealor Chanel Mason, Jeraud, Jeremiah Jr. and Jehman Williams, Carl Quincy Clay, II, Lauren, Sydney and Brandon Talbert, Rameses Earl Roberts Richards, and Marcus Sebastian Mason.

Leonard, Sr. will be lovingly remembered by his sister Dottie and his nieces Cheri, Donna and Shanel, along with a host of other relatives and friends.

He recently imparted the profound statement to his loved ones, a motto which he lived by, "Everything is manageable in a family." Leonard, Sr. lived his life by anticipating the outcome of an effort before beginning the task. It mattered not how straight the gate or how charged with punishment the scroll, Leonard Sr. was the master of his fate, he was the captain of his soul.

My thoughts and prayers are with the Leonard E. Roberts family. His passing is an enormous loss for my district, Southern California, and the Nation as a whole.

### ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2012

SPEECH OF

### HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, July 8, 2011*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2354) making appropriations for energy and water development and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2012, and for other purposes:

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Chair, today I rise in opposition to the H.R. 2354, the Fiscal Year 2012 Energy & Water Development Appropriations Bill. In particular, I oppose the provisions of this legislation that would rescind all remaining unobligated high-speed rail American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds. The rescission would eliminate rail funding for the high-speed Chicago to Detroit line, eliminate thousands of jobs, and provide fewer travel options for my constituents.

Well over \$492 million is cut from three projects, which are critical components of this high speed rail line. Even worse, these cuts would eliminate more than 13,000 jobs in a community where good paying jobs are few and far between.

High speed rail would give my constituents a viable and green commuting option in the Midwest. Having the ability to travel from Detroit to Chicago with the speed of a plane flight would open the doors to new business investments in the Metro Detroit area and connect major markets in the Midwest. It would be a win-win for consumers and business.

Mr. Chair, it is appalling that this body seems to lack the courage to strive for greatness for America.

Franklin Coolidge had that courage. He worked with Congress to create the Hoover Dam.

Dwight Eisenhower had that courage. He worked with Congress to create the National Highway System.

John Kennedy had that courage. He and Congress sent our country to the moon.

Where is this body's courage? Where is the belief that America can still do and build great things? Do we still have the desire to be the best, or will we let China lead the way on when it comes to manufacturing and high speed rail in the 21st Century?

I for one believe America can, and must, be a leader when it comes to investing in our country's economic future. I urge my colleagues to reject this defeatist bill and embrace a 21st century transit system.

### COMMEMORATING THE LIFE AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF FORMER FIRST LADY BETTY FORD

### HON. MARY BONO MACK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 12, 2011*

Mrs. BONO MACK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to one of the most influential and transformative First Ladies of our time, Betty Ford.

Born Elizabeth Ann Bloomer on April 8, 1918, Betty grew up in Michigan and studied dance, which ultimately helped lead her to the city of New York where she found work as a model and taught children to support her studies. In 1948, Betty married Gerald R. Ford, the future President of the United States, shortly before he began serving the first of his 13 successful terms in the U.S. House of Representatives. Mrs. Ford made it clear early on that her first priority was her family, but, it soon became apparent that would not be her only role in public life.

As First Lady during a particularly turbulent time for our Nation, Mrs. Ford spoke plainly and openly about the challenges confronting all Americans; and the people loved her for her candor and common sense. The Ford family reflected the core values of the American people, but, they were also not afraid to let the Nation see that their family was not perfect simply because it resided in the White House. Mrs. Ford spoke openly about the struggles their family faced and became one of the first women in public life to discuss her own battles with breast cancer and prescription drug addiction. Sharing her story raised the level of public consciousness and understanding of these important issues and made it "OK" for people to seek treatment and recovery.

Although her actions as First Lady had an immediate and profound impact on American culture, her work after she left the White House may have had the biggest impact on ensuring her lasting legacy as a leader in the recovery movement.

Following their time in the White House, President and Mrs. Ford relocated to Rancho Mirage, California and Vail, Colorado. As full-time residents of Rancho Mirage, they resided in the Congressional District which I would come to have the honor of representing, and I was incredibly proud to call the Fords constituents and dear friends. The Fords were fixtures in our desert community and many local residents counted them as friends. President and Mrs. Ford contributed greatly to countless worthwhile causes and generously shared that most precious of commodities, their time. In 2008, I proudly authored a bill designating their neighborhood post office as the "Gerald